

Indian Policies Unaltered

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The Washington Post Foreign Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 21—Defense Minister Y. B. Chavan sought to reassure the West today that the new \$300-million Indian military aid agreement with Moscow will not force New Delhi to be neutralist on the side of the Soviet Union.

Chavan told Parliament that the Indian military buildup against China "is necessarily guided by our foreign policy of nonalignment, which will continue to govern our actions in the field of defense procurement."

He said that "we have not the slightest intention of playing military assistance from one country against military assistance from another. Our five-year defense plan identifies the requirements of the armed forces to enable them to discharge the task assigned to them. These carefully worked out requirements guide us in seeking assistance from friendly sources where it is available.

U.S. Supports 8 Divisions

The 2000-word Chavan statement was a carefully-balanced report on his military aid mission to Washington in May and Moscow in August. He stressed that "in both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. there was a complete recognition" of the bona fides of Indian neutrality.

Outlining plans for an 825,000-man army, Chavan stressed that the United States was not only helping support eight mountain divisions but has "fully recognised" the need for strengthening the defense production base in India." He singled out U.S. credits for setting up rifle and ammunition factories at Warangal and Ambajhari.

His disclosure that Britain had agreed to give financial aid in building three destroyer escorts in Bombay appeared to rule out large-scale Indian naval procurement in the Soviet Union in the near future.

The statement confirmed that the arms aid agreement with Moscow included the purchase of light tanks. Reliable sources indicated that the Army will get 75 Soviet tanks of the 13-ton variety. Chavan did not disclose the financial outlay involved in the Moscow agreement. But authoritative sources stated that the Soviet Union has now opened \$300-million line of credit to cover Indian military procurement.

Moscow Aid Cited

The Chavan visit to Moscow reportedly led to formal agreement for the first time on the terms of Soviet military aid purchases entered into since the 1962 Chinese invasion. Precise terms for ground-to-air missiles and other items purchased during the past year have hitherto been kept indefinite by Moscow pending future developments in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

It is understood that the \$300 million figure embraces the cumulative total of India's

Defense Minister Cites Value of U.S. Help

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military aid purchases in Moscow consummated or projected to date and breaks down as follows: \$125 million for a complex of factories to assemble a new model of the Mig-21 supersonic jet aircraft with an all-weather, night flying capability. \$140 million for 50 ready-to-fly Migs to be used before the manufacturing complex has gone into production.

\$80 million for an estimated 30 firing complexes of ground-to-air missiles.

\$30 million for AN-12 transport aircraft and M-4 helicopters.

\$16 million for future overhauls programs to keep the AN-12s operational.

\$9 million for light tanks.

India is not actually expected to make any of the key components of the Migs under the reported agreement. Sophisticated electronic equipment will be imported and the blueprints kept in Soviet hands. Even the engine is not likely to be manufactured here.

This in effect cancels out the nationalist rationale of the factories as a step toward defense self-sufficiency. India will remain closely tied to the Soviet Union for spare parts and could not rely on the planes in a combat situation without Soviet cooperation.

But this also means that the prospect of a Soviet-oriented Indian Air Force can no longer

by Soviet Aid

be dismissed as a will-of-the-wisp dependent on the completion of a complex supersonic aircraft factory at some unspecified distant date.

This will greatly complicate what have already been difficult U.S. policy choices in South Asia. Pakistan is ex-

pected to press for more U.S. supersonic jets to match India's developing strength in Migs. Yet the goal of U.S. policy is to minimize tensions in the region and to persuade both India and Pakistan that scarce resources should be devoted to economic betterment.